

Overcoming Telecommute Objections

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Identify Objections	Fact Finding/Cause	Action Plan
<i>How do we know they are working? Productive?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do they do now at work?• How is productivity measured?• May have an unproductive employee at work they have not dealt with.• Few measurement tools at work.• No current goals/objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal training for supervisors, set up guidelines, get information to supervisors.• Short-term contract for deliverables.• Work into one day of telecommute and then expand.
<i>How do you keep employees in touch with the office?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not as much technology at home.• Some positions just can't telecommute.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask telecommuters to check in frequently.• Set guidelines for communication.• Allow part time telecommuting.• Select core hours.
<i>Costs and Savings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't justify costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use web calculators.• Implement a part time program and allow telecommuters to use own equipment.
<i>How would we measure productivity?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not understanding employee's job.• Lack of trust of employee.• Few measurement tools.• No current goals/objectives so would have to develop them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teletraker software.• Management by objectives.• Train managers and employees.
<i>How can we manage remote employees?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't see employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop communication guidelines.
<i>Document sharing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to be shared among employees; some employees can't telecommute.• Some positions just can't telecommute.• Large visual documents – plans.• Confidentiality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define work to be done.• Not telecommute 100% of time.• Some work needs to be done in office.• Use e-mail, phone.• Bring teams together often.

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<i>Worker's compensation issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costly to make telecommute site safe.• Liability is perceived as employers'.• No control of environment outside of office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worker's comp is applied to specific work area in employee's home.• Inspections by employers with upfront notification.• Self-evaluation list for safety.• Keep lawyers in the loop of agreement.
<i>Equity among employees and selection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animosity among staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer alternate work schedules.• Telecommute is not for every employee and a management prerogative.
<i>Coverage – too small to telecommute</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not for small organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up job expectations.• Set up a trail period for 90 days – pull back with no penalty.• Increased job cross-training.
<i>Employee perception of selection can be negative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of “haves” and “have nots.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up an application system; criteria for selection.
<i>Technology issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get with IT on what you can and can't do and cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with IT and set up a plan.• Start with part-time.• Employees cover connectivity costs.• Employees provide equipment.
<i>Communication and keeping in touch</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible via e-mail and phone and let others know.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let other staff know how to reach you when telecommuting in a way most effective for your company.

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<i>Managers are against telecommuting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Probe for who has an objection (what executive or manager?)• Get more info about what their objection is.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take reasons and put together a plan and answer objections; play to manager's priorities/ hot buttons; stress bottom line benefits. Start small – ease your way into it.• Seek other contacts at higher levels in the account – try to develop another high level “Champion”.• Highlight competitors that have successful telecommute programs, and mention competitive advantage offered by telecommute (employee recruiting & retention)
<i>Decision not made locally – it's made at Corporate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find out if corporate has a program.• Assess whether corporate would be open to the idea of telecommute.• Determine how IT decisions are made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask for a contact at Corporate –may be able to contact and develop a “Champion” there.• When will Corporate Executives be in town? Could we meet with them while they're here, or audio-conference?• Pilot telecommuting locally, and then approach Corporate with positive results –could be the example for a corporate-wide program!
<i>Employer showed interest, but now nothing seems to be happening (or is moving very slowly)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine bottlenecks.• May need more support and organization from us to get started.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convene a steering committee meeting• Provide milestones and timelines• Assign responsibilities.

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<i>I'm interested in getting employers in my area to start telecommute programs – but I don't know where to start. How do I determine which employers to target, and how do I get their attention, and/or get them interested?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review case studies.• Identify informal programs that may be prime for growth• Identify formal programs that may be ready for expansion• Identify business reasons for telecommute related to site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host seminars.• Create local telecommute campaign, targeting employers affected by road construction or other business disruptions.• Partner with other organizations to hold a seminar, maybe focused on Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery.
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